



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Storm Drain Low Flow Utility Boxes Public Art Project

June 21, 2004 Meeting

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Pacific Beach Recreation Center

1405 Diamond Street, San Diego, CA 92109

Attendees

Community Representatives

Camilla Ingram, Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Recreation Council
Carol Blomstrom, Discover Pacific Beach
Claude-Anthony Marengo, La Jolla Community Planning Association
Deborah Marengo, Promote La Jolla
Don Billings, Torrey Pines Community Planning Board
Doug Zilm, Ocean Beach Planning Board
Jackie Booth, La Jolla Shores Association
Jas Grewal, La Jolla Town Council
Jeanine Naviaux, Birdrock Community Council
Jeffrey Shorn, La Jolla Historical Society
Jim Neri, Friends of Windansea
Maura McHugh, Ocean Beach Town Council

Artist Selection Panelist

Alan Rosenblum, Architect, Estudio Teddy Cruz

Artists

Jody Zellen
Debby & Larry Kline
Neal Bociek

City Staff

Mark Nassar, Project Manager
Dana Springs, Public Art Project Coordinator
Betsy Brennan, Council District 1 Representative
Katie Keach, Council District 2 Representative

Meeting Summary

Dana Springs, City Public Art Project Coordinator, gave a brief introduction to the meeting and presented the following details about the project:

The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture (Commission) is conducting an artist selection process to integrate public artwork into a series of 21 utility boxes along the coast

between Torrey Pines and Ocean Beach. The budget for the artwork is \$27,000. One artist will be selected to treat all the boxes.

The goals for this public artwork, as set forth in the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), reviewed and approved by the Coastal Community Cultural Committee, are:

- Integrating original works of art into the beach environment
- Conceptually and aesthetically connecting each box to its specific location and to all the other boxes
- Mitigating the negative visual impact of the boxes
- Drawing from local beach history and culture to develop a concept for the artwork
- Creating a “trail” that attracts both residents and tourists

To gather input and feedback from each community where the boxes are located, the Commission consulted with staff from Council Districts 1 and 2 and then sent out letters to the chairs of 20 community groups asking for one representative from each group to compose the Coastal Community Cultural Committee (4C). Those groups include:

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| ▪ Torrey Pines Community Planning Grp. | ▪ Discover Pacific Beach |
| ▪ La Jolla Shores Association | ▪ Pacific Beach Town Council |
| ▪ La Jolla Town Council | ▪ Pacific Beach Community Plan. Comm. |
| ▪ La Jolla Community Planning Assoc. | ▪ Mission Beach Precise Planning Board |
| ▪ La Jolla Historical Society | ▪ Ocean Beach Planning Board |
| ▪ Promote La Jolla | ▪ Ocean Beach Comty. Develop. Corp. |
| ▪ Windansea Surf Club | ▪ Ocean Beach Main Street Association |
| ▪ Friends of Windansea | ▪ Ocean Beach Town Council |
| ▪ Birdrock Community Council | ▪ Ocean Beach Historical Society |
| ▪ Pacific Beach Historical Society | ▪ Sunset Cliffs Nat. Park. Rec. Council |
| | ▪ Peninsula Community Planning Board |

To date, 4C has given input about and completed a review of the scope and content of the RFQ sent out to artists last fall. Twenty-six artists sent in applications. The Artist Selection Panel (ASP) shortlisted three artists: Jody Zellen, the team of Larry and Debby Kline, and Neal Bociek.

The purpose of tonight’s meeting is:

- To inform the members of 4C about the artist selection process;
- To introduce the members of 4C to the three artists competing for the commission; and
- To gather input from the members of 4C so the artists can develop their proposals.

City project manager, Mark Nassar, briefly discussed the locations, purpose and operations of the storm drain low flow utility boxes.

Alan Rosenblum, one of the members of the Artist Selection Panel, presented his rationale for selecting the three shortlisted artists, and stayed for the remainder of the evening to hear the comments from the community representatives.

All three artists showed slides of their past work and talked about their art-making practices and philosophies.

The meeting attendees gave the following feedback to the artists:

- The disparity between efforts to preserve the coastline and the pressures of urbanization create a unique tension. The boxes themselves are evidence of urbanization, yet their purpose is to protect the water. The boxes represent the tension between the preservation of nature and urbanization.
- The unique tension between the preservation of nature and urbanization might be recorded in an interesting way if the politics and culture of each neighborhood were explored in the artwork. For example, Ocean Beach is resisting gentrification while the other communities are not.
- The culture of Ocean Beach is diametrically opposite to the culture of La Jolla.
- Each community needs its own identity.
- The artwork should make the boxes truly a part of their locations.
- The boxes should be a series of touchstones for people who traverse the coast.
- The boxes shouldn't be camouflaged or artificially hidden. Don't treat them like those cell towers disguised to look like pine trees.
- The artwork should engage the community and be a source of enjoyment for pedestrians.
- The artwork should cause a reaction, not go unnoticed.
- Artwork seems like a natural match in an environment where people are walking, exercising and relaxing.
- The artwork should be something that creates a cerebral dialogue when we're walking by.
- The artwork should be thought-provoking, functional, utilitarian, and interactive.
- The artwork should be something interactive: mentally, physically interactive.
- Use materials that are pleasing to each community. For example, using recycled material in Ocean Beach would be appropriate. The "think green" mentality is important.
- Contact with the ocean is an important feature of these communities.
- Many of these communities are trying to retain their culture as small beach towns.
- Some of these communities have long histories while some others are newer and have less connection to the past.
- Something to think about is that all these communities front the ocean.
- Frequently, new development separates people from the water so the artwork should strategically connect the community to the water.
- San Diego exists because of its link to the bays, but it's nearly impossible now to actually get there or touch the water.
- The water and ocean should not be a "theme" but more of a "concept."
- We don't want waves or sailboats painted on the boxes.
- The artwork should go beyond the box and interact with the forces of nature: light, spaces, and atmosphere.
- An example of public art we like is the mosaic wall at the Del Mar Library. It's good because people cross to that side of the street just to stop, look and touch it.
- Other examples of art we like are Dale Chihuly's glass and Gaudi's work in Barcelona.
- Niki de St. Phalle's *Sun God* at UCSD is an example of art we like. It's so joyful.
- The lifeguard call box at Boomer Beach is an example of public art we like. It's a memorial to a body surfer, but it's such a subtle piece, that communicates a lot with just a little.
- These boxes need to be memorable and last generations.
- Artwork on the boxes that creates a perceptual depth of field would be interesting.
- The boxes should be fun.
- The artwork should be graffiti-proof.
- The artwork should be able to withstand the environmental conditions.

- The 3-D possibilities for the artwork are interesting.

One community member not able to attend meeting submitted the following input via voicemail prior to the meeting:

- Blend the boxes into their surroundings.
- Don't create art that screams "here I am."
- Don't create art that interferes with the natural beauty of the beach environment.

The next steps in the process are:

1. The three artists will each develop proposals.
2. The artists will present their proposals to 4C for comments. (Possibly in August; a notice will be sent out)
3. The artists will present their proposals to the ASP and one proposal will be selected.